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Summary record of the 33rd meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Sharma ..... (Nepal)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 111: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2004-2005 (*continued*) (A/57/16, A/57/85 and A/57/636)

1. **Mr. Pulido León** (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the late introduction of the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2004-2005 and the late issuance of the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) had left insufficient time for proper consideration of an item of the greatest importance, under which the General Assembly would decide on the preliminary estimate of resources to accommodate the proposed programme of activities for the next biennium. In that regard the Group endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendation for a preliminary estimate of $2.92 billion. The Group also reaffirmed the priorities approved in General Assembly resolution 55/234, and wished to see resources allocated accordingly.

2. He noted the Secretary-General's proposal to take the provision for special political missions out of the outline, although the General Assembly, in its resolutions 53/206 and 55/233, had decided to include such a provision in the interest of predictability. The Group endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the provision for special political missions in the outline should not exceed $170 million gross.

3. With regard to the level of the contingency fund, the Group recognized the special situation in the first year of the current biennium, and supported the proposal to maintain the contingency fund at 0.75 per cent of the proposed outline for the biennium 2004-2005. Lastly, should additional resources be required during the biennium, the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213 should be strictly adhered to.

4. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that her delegation endorsed the statement by the representative of Venezuela. It was important for the General Assembly to have adequate time for consideration of reports submitted to it. The proposed programme budget outline was of particular importance as the first step in formulating the budget for the biennium. The decision taken thereon by the General Assembly would affect the ability of the Secretariat to implement mandated programmes. Her delegation endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendation for a preliminary estimate of $2.92 billion, and reaffirmed its support for the priorities contained in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

5. She welcomed the inclusion of estimated requirements of $29.8 million for information technology and common services facilities infrastructure, particularly in view of the negative impact of the cuts made at the beginning of the biennium.

6. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 53/206 and 55/233, had indicated that the budget outline should provide a greater level of predictability of resources required for the following biennium, promote greater involvement of Member States in the budgetary process and thereby facilitate the broadest possible agreement on the programme budget. She noted the proposal not to include a preliminary estimate for special political missions, and in that connection endorsed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee.

7. The level of the contingency fund should be increased. The difficulties encountered in the first year of the current biennium and the application of restrictive budgetary policies intended to meet new expenditure from within existing resources meant that the question of the contingency fund should be reviewed.

8. Lastly, she reaffirmed the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 establishing the procedure for additional expenditure following adoption of the budget. In particular, the provisions of paragraph 11 of annex I to General Assembly resolution 41/213, must be implemented should there be a need for additional resources during the biennium.

9. **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico) said that fiscal discipline not only meant the efficient use of resources, but also a commitment to transparency, accountability and obtaining results.

10. The real growth of 5.8 per cent reflected in the proposed programme budget outline was the result of the approval of additional activities by Member States

and resistance to change on the part of the Secretariat. In that regard the reform process, aimed at promoting greater efficiency within the Secretariat, was important.

11. His delegation endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee and of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the proposed programme budget outline. Consideration of the outline should allow delegations to indicate their expectations for the upcoming proposed programme budget. In particular, the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005 should take account of decisions on reform of the Organization, cover all mandated activities, encourage fiscal discipline and the transparent managing of resources, and place the Organization in the vanguard of efficiency through the use of new technology and flexible management.

12. **Ms. Wang** Xiaxia (China) said that the standard mix of informal consultations and formal meetings allowed Member States a valuable opportunity to exchange views, and that it was important to have adequate time for formulation of those views. The proposed programme budget outline for 2004-2005, on the basis of a preliminary estimate of $2.92 billion, represented an increase over the current biennium. In that regard she noted the recommendation for a provision for special political missions of $170 million. The outline should also reflect the Millennium Declaration and the medium-term plan, and should ensure effective implementation of priority activities. Equally, the quest for greater efficiency in management should be continued. It was important for the budget to present a full picture and for there to be greater transparency.

Agenda item 112: Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.5/57/L.38

13. **Mr. Pulido León** (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.5/57/L.38, on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, had been revised to read: "*Decides also* that the United Nations will provide the space occupied by the Institute free of rent and maintenance charges starting with the biennium 2004-2005 and will also provide in future budgets an amount of $305,400 biennially for that purpose". The change would mean that there were no programme budget implications for the current biennium.

14. **Mr. Christiansen** (Denmark) asked the Secretariat to confirm that the change in the draft resolution meant that there were no programme budget implications for the biennium 2002-2003.

15. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, Controller) confirmed that the draft resolution would have no programme budget implications in the current biennium.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.